

le culte des saints mobilise avant tout les “exclus de l’orthodoxie”, tels noirs, femmes, pauvres urbains et ruraux. La symbolique du sultan noir et la place que se forge la guérisseuse Bouchra ne doivent pas seulement être comprises comme anti-mythe ou contre-rituel (chapitres 4 et 6), mais aussi comme stratégies de reconnaissance de groupes subalternes dans des rapports de pouvoir inégalitaires.

Fenneke Reysoo

Rieger-Jandl, Andrea (ed.): *Tradition in Transition. Reflections on the Architecture of Ethiopia*; with a Special Focus on the Afar Region. Wien: Institut für Vergleichende Architekturforschung, 2013. 278 pp. ISBN 978-3-900265-26-7. Price: € 38.90

Divided into two parts, this book focuses in its first part on northern Ethiopian architecture and in the second part on traditional architecture of the partly nomadic living ethnic group of the Afar people in the remote north-eastern area of Ethiopia called Afar region.

In 2011, the Austrian architect and ethnologist Andrea Rieger-Jandl led an interdisciplinary excursion to Ethiopia in which international professional staff from Ethiopia, South Africa, and Austria as well as students from both fields – architecture and cultural anthropology – participated. The long-term aim of this project was to build a school with only local building material in the Afar region. Keeping this in mind, the second part of the book has been created while the first part focuses on traditional and modern Ethiopian architecture mainly in the north of the country in its different varieties. The excursion members, several staff members of the University of Addis Ababa, a South African architect as well as a local NGO leader make a total of 20 authors who accumulated their expertise and their research findings inside this book.

Following an introduction by the editor, the first part consists of eight chapters dealing with several kinds of architecture which can be found in Ethiopia. Alice Deix starts into the project with a contribution about Ethiopia’s history and building culture, while Irmengard Mayer subsequently works out the peculiarities of the historically unique and famous Christian church architecture in the northern Ethiopian places Lalibela, Aksum, Gondar, Lake Tana, Debre Damo, and Gheralta where several churches lie high up on a mountain range. Peter Rich develops in his contribution a master plan for the city of Aksum for future touristic development, followed by Asgedom Haile et al. who focus on indigenous Tigrayan architecture. Petra Gruber then describes the back side of Bole Road in the emerging capital Addis Ababa, where she found a variety of different buildings and housing projects. Renate Bornberg makes a sidestep to the city of Awasa that lies southwest of Addis Ababa, showing traditional dwellings as well as “modern” building while concentrating on city development and urban identity. Marianne Schweigkofler devoted herself to the moving history and livings of the Beta Isra’el, the Ethiopian Jews. Prefacing the second part of the book, Konstanze Elbel analyses school buildings from Karlheinz Böhm’s successful NGO “Menschen für

Menschen,” their used building materials, comfort, planning, construction, and costs.

The second part of the book that comprises six chapters commences with a cultural anthropological contribution from Rafaela Liendl and Jutta Leithner focusing on politics, religion, economy, social structure, and education of the Afar people compared to the rest of Ethiopia. This is followed by a contribution from Valerie Browning explaining her nonprofit-earning work for the Afar and the daily challenges that she, her team, and the people face. Barbara Weber et al. describe the traditional architecture and settlement structure of the still nomadically living Afar of Ali Adayto. Subsequently, the editor Andrea Rieger-Jandl focuses on the transition from nomadic mobile structures to earth architecture in the developing cities of the region. Emilia Chocian et al. describe their findings of clay samples taken at different places in the Afar Region and afterwards analysed in Austria. Finally, Rafaela Liendl et al. provide a theoretical approach and considerations on participating in building projects in less developed regions. This chapter and the book as well close with five plans for potential school buildings in the Afar region developed by students of architecture.

On 278 pages and in 14 chapters plus introduction this book contains a high range of sketches and pictures, some of them even in colour. It is aimed not only at architects, anthropologists, and historians but as well to the passionate and interested reader or traveller who wants to douse into the topics of traditional architecture, rock-hewn architecture, clay building, and/or architecture on the Horn of Africa, respectively Ethiopia, but also on the practice of a nomadic lifestyle or the challenges of nonprofit work.

Patric Kment

Robin, Cynthia: *Everyday Life Matters. Maya Farmers at Chan*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2013. 244 pp. ISBN 978-0-8130-4499-6. Price: \$ 74.95

The importance of everyday practice is without doubt; it is not the Wedgwood china but the Corning Ware that is a better measure of the economy. If you ask anyone what they use often they are likely to talk plastic over crockery, and prized china only on special occasions. The long tradition of emphasizing the inventories of the exotic and the elite in the description of civilizations is hardly unique and the Maya case is one of the prominent examples. Calls for notice of common contexts date back to the post-World War II era when W. W. Taylor levied his harsh critique of Maya studies in *American Antiquity*. We have come a long way since then, there has been much attention to the things of everyday life, those aspects that are most common and play a role for all participants in the society whether administrative elite or the common farmer.

Robin’s contention is that she is marking new ground in her attractively title “Everyday Life Matters. Maya Farmers at Chan.” Using what seems a bit of a laundry list of writers who have touched upon what she calls “everyday life theory,” she concludes this opening with six framing points she tells us she will address in her archaeology

of everyday life. Better if brought up at the start of her introductory section to integrate the sequence of theoretical ideas that are to be critical in her work, we learn that an approach to everyday life is central to human existence, representative of complex interactions, based on ordinary objects, reflective social change, featured in people's social roles, and implicates the multidimensional lives of people. She could have taken these points at the outset and extracted the valuable features of her theoreticians to give the reader what she thought of the main points. Without these guideposts, the first section is weak.

When Robin moves to the archaeology, we do not fare much better. Instead of using the framing points to structure her discussion of the archaeology of everyday life, she takes on the effort by archaeological topic: household, gender, landscape, and space. These she ultimately critiques by remonstrating the colloquial uses of everyday life in archaeology, though she does awaken the reader to innovative possibilities in the examination of everyday life. Robin argues, as if novel, that all people leave behind materials and spatial traces of their everyday lives and that an examination of ordinary materials and spaces will provide an effective context for interpreting social organization, power, change. This is what we all are aiming for.

The heart of her theoretical stance is revealed in her chapter on methods. Here Robin brings in her personal experiences and work at Chan, the site that features in the subtitle of her book. Interesting perspectives and concrete examples from her fieldwork are woven loosely to her theoretical discussions with select comparative examples. These discussions bring together a diversity of perspectives, embracing academic and lay thought, bridging humanistic and scientific divides that promises to result in a critical archaeology of everyday life. Robin presents these ideas as distinct.

The core of the book focuses on the archaeology of Chan, situated in the Belize River area not far south from the significant but minor center of Xunantich, considered the administrative power under which Chan operated. Chan itself has an elite administrative compound surrounded by smaller and larger residential units that make up the Chan community. The locale is typified by good cultivable land for farming. Her data show that the community managed the landscape with an intricate organization of terraces to control water distribution. This complex modified landscape was integrated by residential and field structures that grew over time in relationship to the local geography. Robin proposes to evaluate Chan's residences in the context of the Belize Valley; her reference is not comprehensive and leaves large data sets developed by the Belize River Archaeological Settlement Survey out of her comparative discussion. These data would bolster her arguments on the importance of everyday life where residential distribution of exotics, special artifact types, and the consideration of everyday household assemblages featured as a significant component of analyses. The exclusion of these data is surprising and suggests a narrow focus and an incomplete view of the region.

The coverage of sustainability, a vital topic when examining the historical ecology of the tropics, Robin un-

accountably sets her data apart. She takes her valuable data on successful forest management as evidence of the special place a small community might have in the larger setting, suggesting that Chan developed sustainable practices while the major center of Tikal had unsustainable extractive practices. Why would the detailed paleobotanical work at Chan, remarkable in the Maya area, not cast significant doubt on assumptions of forest and environmental destruction that prevail in the academic and popular literature? Increasing research and published studies have been chipping away at the belief that forests and fields cannot coexist. These data from Chan play particularly well in this light. It would seem that the Chan case is more likely the norm not the exception and could be used to undermine the received wisdom that the Maya destroyed their environment.

In this book, Robin contends that her perspective incorporating the common farmers is exceptional among Maya research; that her attempt to consider the qualities of everyday life stands apart of the leagues of Maya research. Her research, as presented in her earlier edited volume on Chan does set a new standard on the presentation of residential research, though there are other comparable works. She incorporates comparative study of residential data from her research group; Robin has not incorporated other relevant data both from the nearby Belize River area of El Pilar, nor other data from the greater Petén. These data from everyday settings of large and small residential units would corroborate and fortify her position that the general Classic Maya populace had, qualitatively if not quantitatively, access to exotics and that everyday life matters were as varied as they were common.

I could not agree more with Robin's conclusions that building models without considering the majority of the populace, the farmers, is flawed. As well, to consider these majority simply as passive components fails to recognize the fundamental basis of agrarian economies. No elite administration could survive without the active engagement of the mainstream. In fact, while unexplored in Robin's book, it may well be that, ultimately, the disconnection of the administration with the farming populace lead to the so-called "collapse" of Maya civilization.

Anabel Ford

Román-Odio, Clara: *Sacred Iconographies in Chicana Cultural Productions*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013. 192 pp. ISBN 978-0-230-34000-8. Price: £ 55.00

Gloria Anzaldúa (1942–2004) lived a life all too short, but she left a mighty legacy. Though Chicana feminism has a long trajectory, dating back to the 1970s at least, the publication of Anzaldúa's seminal work in 1987 marks a watershed not only in Mexican American women's art and letters, but for third world feminist studies and for academic discourses and liberation movements well beyond her immediate sphere of engagement. Her concepts and vocabulary have shaped and informed the way that scholarship is undertaken and assessed. Clara Román-Odio's book, "Sacred Iconographies in Chicana Cultural